

couraging, and as your Governor, speaking for all Maryland citizens, I congratulate you for a public service of immeasurable value.

A year ago in this same hall, I talked with you briefly about the plans of this Administration to embark upon a new program of State support of public education. A few months before, I had asked the Legislative Council's Committee on Taxation and Fiscal Matters (the so-called Hughes Committee) to study the need of additional State assistance and the possibility of revising the formula of distribution. I had instructed the committee to submit its proposals in time for action at the 1964 session of the General Assembly. I declined to discuss the details of the plan for the reason, as I stated, that I felt it would be premature to do so at the time since the matter was under consideration by the Committee. Nevertheless, I made it clear that I believed strongly that the time had come for bold new action on the part of the State to enable Maryland to maintain its high standards of excellence in the field of public education.

As we all know, the Committee's proposal was submitted to the General Assembly, under the sponsorship of my Administration and with strong endorsements by this Association, the State Department of Education, Parent-Teacher Associations and other groups which have consistently supported programs for the betterment of our educational system. It is not necessary for me here to enumerate the specific provisions of this legislation, the details of which you are all familiar. It is sufficient to say that the formula for the distribution of State aid was revamped and that State assistance to local governments for the operation of their public schools was increased to an extent that would allow them to pay higher salaries for teachers, reduce the size of classes, provide more special educational services and purchase more books and materials for instruction.

The legislation, adopted by the General Assembly and signed into law by me, was acclaimed as the most significant advancement in public education made by the State in more than forty years. This Association of teachers, in its official publication, called it a "milestone in Maryland education" and said the 1964 Legislature which enacted it could "justifiably be labeled the 'education General Assembly.'" These statements are no mere flights of fancy. On the contrary, they aptly and accurately describe the measures we have taken to improve our educational system. The plan which we have adopted, and which is now in effect, represents the determination of the enlightened people of Maryland to meet the educational challenges of our age.